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Watch will be wear it's at

by Sophie Aubrey

You can resist the Apple Watch's pull for now, but an expert is warning even laggards who don't strap on will be affected.

University of Wollongong tech researcher Katina Michael told *mX* it was only a matter of time before interactive wearables were as widespread as smartphones, and those who did not conform could harm their job prospects or access to life and health insurance.



Technology is getting closer to the human body. Picture: AFP

Tech-heads have rushed to snap up the watch, which is being sold as a health gadget with its ability to track physiological traits. But Associate Prof Michael said detecting someone's pulse and temperature could reveal much more than just that, such as when they were asleep or exercising, sick or healthy, happy or down and anxious or calm.

Michael said that by capturing bodily data together with information on our movements, - purchases and social life, it became easy to work out what a person was thinking.



Your physiological data could be under the microscope. Picture: THINKSTOCK

She said there was a big question mark over what would happen to this data in future, and it could easily fall into the hands of employers and insurers who could deny jobs or policies to people who didn't fit their mould.

But keeping private by forgoing wearables isn't going to help you.

In a workplace scenario, Michael said bosses would favour access to data from wearables because they could monitor their employees' performance and could reject applicants with undesirable characteristics.



Job interviews may be about to get a lot more complicated. Picture: THINKSTOCK

"If someone is not performing well under pressure or is stressed meeting executives ... and certain activities have flustered them, the watch will know before they even know," she said.

Similarly, she said hirers would prefer candidates with available data when deciding who is the best fit – and you just have to hope that it's you.

Meanwhile, health and life insurers could deem someone ineligible for a policy if data indicated they didn't eat well, didn't exercise enough or had certain mental or physical illnesses.

"They may say to us you either give us the data or I'm not going to insure you," she said.

"So there will be the main insurers and other small players that pick up the rest. But you'll

pay a much higher premium for less service.”

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